

Message Text

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44

ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 OMB-01 IO-10 SCS-03 SCA-01 SY-05 OPR-02

A-01 OC-05 CCO-00 DEAE-00 AGR-05 EB-07 FAA-00 DOTE-00

FEAE-00 INT-05 OES-03 AID-05 SCCT-01 ACDA-05 COME-00

/119 W

----- 058216

O 171628Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3932

CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ANKARA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ATHENS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ROME IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 4947

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS LE PLO

SUBJECT: BEIRUT SITREP - 1500Z

REF: BEIRUT 4916

1. CEASEFIRE HAS BEEN INCREASINGLY EFFECTIVE AS SAY PASSED

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AND KNOWLEDGEABLE ARMY SOURCE IN BEIRUT COMMAND AND

OTHERS REPORT SITUATION GENERALLY IS LOOKING GOOD. FIRING IN PORT/QUARANTINA AREA, WHICH WAS CLEARLY AUDIBLE THIS MORNING, HAS FALLEN SILENT SINCE ABOUT 1200Z. BASTA/CORNICH MAZRA AREA, WHICH WAS SCENE EARLIER IN DAY OF CLASHES, APPEARS NOW SOMEWHAT QUIETER, ALTHOUGH GOL AUTHORITIES STILL RECOMMENDING AGAINST TRAVEL THERE. EMBASSY LOCAL EMPLOYEE WHO LIVES ON EDGE OF BASTA SAYS LAST EXPLOSION THERE HEARD ABOUT 1030Z AND THAT SOME BARRICADES HAVE BEEN REMOVED THIS AFTERNOON.

2. LOCAL CITIZENRY CONTINUES TO TEST WATER GINGERLY WITH SOME SHOPS OPEN BUT MOST REMAINING CLOSED, POSSIBLY BECAUSE EMPLOYEES IN OUTLYING SUBURBS STILL CONCERNED RE SITUATION AND/OR UNABLE TO REACH PLACES OF WORK. TRAFFIC REMAINS LIGHTER THAN NORMAL AND TAXIS ARE SCARCE, BUT AMERICAN EYEWITNESSES WHO HAVE RECENTLY TOURED MAIN CENTERS OF CITY REPORT NO DIFFICULTIES AND SOME CLEAN-UP WORK ON SUBSTANTIAL MATERIAL DAMAGE RESULTING FROM FOUR DAYS OF FIGHTING IN PROGRESS. SOME ARMED CIVILIANS LINGERING IN DOORWAYS WERE SIGHTED, BUT POLICE HAVE ESTABLISHED CHECKPOINTS WIDELY AND ARE MANNING THEM. SECURITY DETACHMENT ASSIGNED TO EMBASSY HAS CONFISCATED SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF AUTOMATIC WEAPONS TODAY FROM VEHICLES PASSING IN FRONT OF CHANCERY. OUTSIDE BEIRUT SITUATION, WITH EXCEPTION OF TRIPOLI, APPEARS QUIET. IN TRIPOLI ITSELF, THERE ARE UNCONFIRMED REPORTS THAT FIRING RESUMED APR 17 AND CHRISTIANS FROM MOUNTAINS (MAINLY PRES'S HOMETOWN OF ZGHORTA) AND MUSLIMS FROM AKKAR ARE FILTERING INTO TOWN FOR THE FUN. TRIPOLI/BEIRUT ROAD WAS CLOSED AT SEVERAL POINTS THIS MORNING BUT MAY HAVE BEEN OPENED THIS AFTERNOON.

3. PRES FRANJIE LEFT AUB HOSPITAL AT APPROX 0800Z TO RETURN TO PRESIDENTIAL PALACE. AUB PRES REPORTS THAT, ALTHOUGH HE SHOULD AVOID FATIGUE, PRES IN GOOD CONDITION AND CAPABLE OF ASSUMING PRESIDENTIAL RESPONSIBILITIES.

4. AIRPORT OPEN AND AMCITS WHO HAVE MADE TRIP FROM BEIRUT TODAY REPORT NO RPT NO PROBLEMS ALONG ROAD. AT ABOUT 2300Z APR 16, THREE EMBASSY EMPLOYEES (DEA AND FAS) RETURNING FROM AIRPORT IN EMBASSY CAR WERE FIRED ON BY LONE
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GUNMAN WHO STEPPED FROM BUSHES AT AIRPORT CIRCLE (NEAR SABRA/SHATILA REFUGEE CAMP). CAR HAD PASSED MAN (NOT RPT NOT ROACBLOCK) WHEN INDIVIDUAL WAS OBSERVED SHOUTING AND GESTICULATING. HE THEN FIRED, GRAZING VEHICLE WITH ONE SHOT, BUT DRIVER INCREASED SPEED AND NONE RPT NOE OF OCCUPANTS WAS INJURED. WE DO NOT RPT NOT BELIEVE THIS ATTACK WAS ANTI-AMERICAN ACT SINCE OCCUPANTS OF CAR DO NOT BELIEVE GUNMAN TOOK NOTE OF LICENSE PLATE. SO FAR THERE HAS BEEN LITTLE

DEMONSTRABLE ANTI-AMERICAN SENTIMENT. PHONE LINES, DOWNED
DURING FIGHTING, TO AIRPORT HAVE BEEN REPAIRED. REFINERIES
ARE NOT RPT NOT RESUPPLYING AIRPORT WITH JET FUEL TODAY BUT
PLAN DO SO ON APR 18.

5. ALL AMCITS REMAIN SAFE, ALTHROUGH DISCRETION IN
MOVING ABOUT TOWN STILL INDICATED.

6. INSHA-LLAH (GOD WILLING), THIS WILL BE OUR LAST REGULAR
SITREP ON HHALANGE/PALESTIN AN CRISIS.
GODLEY

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